

**Town of Arlington
Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

Tuesday, April 27, 2004 7:15 PM

Committee members present: Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Ralph Elwell, Jeff Maxtutis, Lt. Jim McHugh, Kevin O'Brien, Mike Rademacher, John Sanchez, Scott Smith, Ed Starr

1. The minutes of 3/23/2004 were approved unanimously.

2. TAC nominating group

Ed Starr announced that a nominating group had been formed with Ralph Elwell and Jack Hurd.

Kevin O'Brien and John Sanchez arrived.

3. Massachusetts Avenue Corridor Request for Proposal (RFP)

John Sanchez reported that one of the bidders had suggested that the RFP be refocused on getting the project to the point where Mass Highway will fund the rest. Since no land takings are needed, several sources of funds are possible, and it may qualify for funding to pay for the engineering work. On Monday 4/26, the Board of Selectmen voted an additional \$25K to provide a total of \$50K from CDBG for the project.

TAC members suggested that a budget of \$40K be attached to the proposal (so as to leave \$10K in reserve), and that bidders be given four weeks to respond. With these changes, the committee voted unanimously to proceed with the RFP.

4. Multi-Use Street/Paths

The proposal is to block off the parking lane on the south side of Mass. Ave. in Arlington Center between Route 60 and Carberry's driveway during the summer months. This would result in the loss of five parking spaces, but would provide a mostly non-sidewalk route for cyclists connecting between the 2 entrances to the Minuteman Bikeway.

Scott Smith presented preliminary 15-minute bicyclist counts (gathered on a weekday early evening and a Saturday afternoon, in nice weather), and sketches of a few alternative designs. Of the 82 cyclists observed during these two counts (total observation period of 30 minutes), 38% were riding on Mass. Ave. on the correct side of the road, 54% were riding on the sidewalk on the south side of Mass. Ave., 5% were riding on the sidewalk on the north side of Mass. Ave., 2% were walking their bikes on the sidewalk, and the remaining 1% (1 person) was riding the wrong way in the travel lane.

Sketches presented included:

- Marking off the parking lanes on the south side of Mass. Ave.
- Guiding cyclists on the Mass. Ave. travel lanes on the correct side of the street
- Continuing the path through the park, with new crossings of Route 60 and Mass. Ave. These crossings would follow where the railroad used to be.

Scott noted that it was important to consider the traffic movements that will occur during each phase of the Mass Ave/Route 60 traffic signal. He also recounted his conversation with Jack

Johnson (chair of the Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee) where it was noted that since all the stakeholders will need to work together for a long term solution, it was important to keep a good relationship, and not to poison that relationship with a controversial short-term solution.

A number of people raised concerns about the idea of blocking off the parking lanes:

- Scott Smith and Lt. McHugh raised a concern about the sidepath issue, with the possibility of collisions between westbound cyclists (riding against the flow of Mass Ave traffic) and motorists exiting Cambridge Savings Bank.
- Ralph Elwell and Kevin O'Brien indicated that there would be strong business objection to the loss of the parking spaces.

We discussed other locations where physical barriers between motorized and non-motorized uses may be appropriate. Possibilities include

- Court Street place (by the Post Office)
- Park Avenue bridge between Mass. Ave. and Downing Square

After a lengthy discussion, the committee voted unanimously not to pursue this use of the parking lane on Mass Ave in Arlington Center. However, the committee does want to continue to consider Court Street and the Park Avenue bridge.

6. Route 60 / Mass. Ave.

Ed Starr presented crash data. Jeff Maxtutis plans to develop and assess several signal plans once they obtain the current timings. Obtaining the current signal timings is proving to be difficult. Kevin O'Brien suggested that a call to Charlie Kolaskis would be helpful.

7. Symmes

Sandy Bourgeois, Terry Dash, and Paul Morrison attended this portion of the meeting.

Elisabeth Carr-Jones reported that the development team has held two committee meetings since the last TAC meeting, with the next meeting scheduled for 4/29. The current schedule is as follows:

- Complete schematic design – end of April
- Submit land disposition agreement – 5/15
- Town Meeting review – 6/30
- Complete environmental review – 9/15
- Closing on land – 12/15

Traffic volume projections are still in flux. Transportation issues include

- Summer Street intersection with Hospital Road
- Access to Woodside Lane
- Sidewalks on Summer Street and Hospital Road
- Bike lanes and parking
- Route 67 bus

Kevin O'Brien noted that the Redevelopment Board would be asking the Board of Selectmen for formal TAC involvement in the Symmes process.

8. Fairmont Street / Parking

Kevin O'Brien noted that Diane Mahon made a point of mentioning Farimont Street parking during the last Board of Selectmen's meeting. Scott Smith stated that thus far, every East Arlington issue that has come before TAC has to some degree involved parking. He presented a sheet outlining how a study might be done. It was noted that any working group should have someone from emergency services, possibly Wayne Springer. Scott Smith, Jeff Maxtutis, and Lt. Jim McHugh volunteered to form a working group.

9. Crosswalk Working Group

Elisabeth Carr-Jones presented a sheet of crosswalks to be done in thermoplastic. They include the Lake Street and Mill Street bikeway crossings plus the remaining uncontrolled crosswalks on Mass. Ave with the following exceptions:

- # 990 (needs a handicap ramp)
- Lafayette Street (needs a handicap ramp)
- Tufts Street (may be moved)

Because the bricks in the brick crosswalks in the Heights may shift, thus causing any thermoplastic to crack and peel, we agreed not to put thermoplastic over the bricks. Rather, these crosswalks would be outlined with 2-foot wide stripes.

After some discussion, it was agreed that crosswalk widths would be as follows:

- 12 feet: Mass Ave and Bikeway crossings
- 10 feet: All other crosswalks

It was determined that all of the crosswalks could be installed in thermoplastic within the budget of \$8,000 established by the DPW for this year.

10. Downing Square and BSC Letter

Elisabeth Carr-Jones reported that there has been little action on Downing Square. Mike Rademacher presented a large sketch of the area. Ideas included:

- A mini-roundabout...may not be enough room
- Connecting Bow Street to Lowell Street east of the intersection
- Making Westminster Street one-way away from the intersection for one block

BSC group had sent a letter to the Redevelopment Board concerning the impacts of allowing left turns into the site from Park Avenue. We discussed the various options for Park Avenue access:

1. Emergency vehicles only. This has the disadvantage of forcing all traffic to/from Park Ave/Mass Ave to go through Downing Square
2. Right turn in/right turn out only. Allows direct access from the site to Mass Ave/Park Ave. Would the site itself then become a cut-through for traffic from Lowell Street to Park Ave. southbound? We agreed that this is not likely to be a major issue.
3. Allow left turns into the site from Park Ave. This is BSC's request, and it permits direct access to the site for motorists traveling from Mass Ave/Park Ave. Possible disadvantage is the creation of a backup on Park Ave due to left turn queueing. We agreed not to object to BSC's request, noting that should the left turns become an issue, they could be banned at a later date.
4. Allow left turns to Park Ave from the site. All agreed that this should be prohibited. Scott Smith noted that the driveway geometry should be designed to discourage these left turns, rather than just relying on signage.

Accordingly, TAC members agreed not to raise objections to the BSC proposal of allowing left

turns from Park Ave. to the site.

11. Status of Past Actions, and Maintenance Issues

John Sanchez stated that Quincy and Gray, as it is a school crossing, will be receiving pentagonal school pedestrian warning signs, when they arrive.

Scott Smith noted that the no parking sign in front of 6 Rawson Road is directly behind a street tree. In a few weeks it will be invisible to approaching motorists. This should be addressed when the Rawson Road /Broadway signage is done.

Jeff Maxtutis noted a difficult intersection at Wollaston. It is on a route for Dallin School students.

Ed Starr noted that the pedestrian signal at Mass Ave and Lockeland is not working.

12. Alternative Transportation Festival

Scott Smith reported that the festival is planned for Sunday 5/16, and plans are well underway. An outstanding issue is money. A few hundred dollars are needed, and the source has not yet been finalized. John Sanchez suggested the possibility of using the sign in front of Town Hall. Kevin O'Brien said he would check to see if the Planning Department could provide financial support to the festival, and would coordinate with Marie Krepelka.

13. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Meeting

Kevin O'Brien attended the TIP meeting on April 1st, and described current effort to consolidate the various studies for the Mass. Ave. corridor. He noted that many of the presenters there were consultants.

14. Policy on Revisiting Decisions

Ed Starr presented the policy on revisiting decisions by TAC. It was adopted with an unanimous vote.

15. Town Department News

John Sanchez reported that, according to Mass Highway, the Summer Street project has been awarded.

Lt. McHugh report that the Police Department has received a grant from the Governor's Highway Safety Bureau for seatbelt enforcement.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 PM

Handouts:

Agenda package including agenda, status of actions to be done, policy of when TAC should revisit completed projects, copy of e-mail to Lewis Edgers of Tufts University – from Ed Starr

Minutes from 3/2004 – from Elisabeth Carr-Jones via Scott Smith

Revised Massachusetts Avenue RFP – from Kevin O’Brien

Arlington Center cyclist counts, bike path crossing sketches, and ideas for an East Arlington parking study – from Scott Smith

Arlington Center crash data – from Ed Starr

2004 Crosswalk Thermoplastic List, Downing Square field notes, and letter from BSC group regarding site access for Lowell Street apartments – from Elisabeth Carr-Jones